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Columbia (U. S. of Colombia, 1863-85) (Presidente 1864-66 (murillo))

INAUGURAL ADDRESS

OF

SENOR MANUEL MURILLO,

ON ENTERING UPON HIS OFFICIAL DUTIES AS

PRESIDENT OF THE U. S. OF COLOMBIA,

On the 10th of April, 1864.

Translated from the "Registro Oficial" of April 13.

WITH A SKETCH OF HIS LIFE,

By S. DEWITT BLOODGOOD,

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SEÑOR MURILLO was born in the year 1818, and is a native of the State of Tolima. Not favored by fortune or descent, his youth was a struggle of honorable ambition against adverse circumstances; but with a resolution and consciousness of inherent power which mark the efforts of all truly great men, he persevered in his efforts to obtain an education suitable to his aspirations, and by his own industry maintained himself during years of application and study, passed through various institutions of learning, and finally left college with highly merited honors. He then entered upon the study of the law, and soon became distinguished not only as an eloquent advocate, but a sound jurist, possessing a thorough acquaintance with the principles and decisions of the courts, and a memory which never failed him in his appeal to authorities and the appropriate citation of the law. At the same time, he was distinguished by his broad and comprehensive views of public affairs, and his advocacy of popular rights. Not only as a speaker, but as a writer he became celebrated, and literally a tribune of the people; and was always their fearless, uncompromising and acknowledged friend. It was not long before he was chosen their representative in several local legislatures, and from these he passed early to a seat in the National Congress, not merely as the choice of a single State, but of many, for at that time, in Colombia, residence was not the necessary qualification of a representative. M. Murillo was therefore chosen a member by nearly all the States at once; each being anxious to avail itself of his powerful championship. He then withdrew for a time, to conduct a mercantile house in Panama, but his natural tastes and the wishes of his countrymen drew him back into public life. He next took up his residence at Santa Martha, where he established and conducted for several years—1845, '6, and '7—a celebrated journal, called the *Mercantile Gazette*, which he edited with great ability and success.

Again brought into the National Congress, he became conspicuous for his fearless statesmanship; and to his personal influence and exertion is attributed the success of the great measure of abolishing slavery in Colombia, a step in advance of the times, for which he has been justly honored. Under the administration of Gen. Lopez he was successively Minister of Foreign Affairs and of Finance, and while occupying the latter post, introduced order and system into the department of the treasury and the administration of its affairs, for which his previous mercantile experience had fully prepared him.

At the election for President in 1856 he was brought forward as a candidate for the office, but there being a division among the liberals in favor of Gen. Mosquera, Señor Ospina was elected, and the consequences of that unfortunate event were, for the time, the overthrow of the constitution, the triumph of the clergy, and the destruction of popular rights. At this period M. Murillo was unanimously elected President of the State of Santander, which position he gave up to assume the direction of a liberal journal at Bogota.

During the career of the party of Ospina, M. Murillo, however, became an object of governmental persecution, and was compelled to withdraw to a place of security to save his life.

On the restoration of the constitution through the patriotic exertions of Gen. Mosquera and the liberals of Colombia, M. Murillo resumed his accustomed political position, and was honored with the mission to France, to represent his regenerated country at the court of the Tuilleries. From thence he was transferred to the United States, where he awaited a year and more the recognition of Colombia by the American government, delayed, it was thought, by intrigues on the part of Gen. Herran and misconceptions at Washington, which he successfully overcame. While in this country he was again nominated to the presidency by the liberal party, and elected by a plurality of votes. Previous to his departure he visited Washington, and was cordially received by the President, the members of his administration, and the foreign ministers, making a marked impression, and becoming a favorite with all these with whom he had intercourse.

In the month of March last he returned to his own country in the U. S. steamer *Glaucus*, and on the 10th of April assumed the reins of government. His inaugural address is pronounced a work of great ability, and his pledges will be fulfilled to the letter.

Colombia has just emerged from a very difficult situation; beset by internal enemies and by foreign foes, the splendid victory of Cuespad has enabled her once more to settle down into peace and tranquillity. M. Murillo, a civilian, statesman, orator, and patriot, with large experience at home and abroad, will do everything in his power to give his countrymen the position among the South American Republics to which they are justly entitled, and which they cannot well lose, unless they become traitors to liberty, and enemies of their own best interests.

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ADDRESS TO PRESIDENT MURILLO, BY GEN. MOSQUERA,

*ON THE OCCASION OF THE INAUGURATION OF THE FORMER TO THE PRESIDENCY,
AND OF THE RESIGNATION, BY THE LATTER, OF HIS OFFICIAL AUTHORITY.*

MR. PRESIDENT:

On the fourth of February I thought I might say that the day had arrived when I would resign the discretionary authority which the people had given me for the purpose of saving the Republic, but new circumstances obliged the Convention to confirm the constitutional power.

The Republic, being now constituted, has elected its high officers according to the Constitution; and you, Sir, have merited to be appointed the chief magistrate to represent the nation abroad, and to heal the wounds of a bloody Revolution. In your hands, Mr. President, I deposit the baton with which I have governed; and, in retiring from the government house, I take with me the firm resolution to support the Constitution, and to teach the citizens to obey the constitutional President.

INAUGURAL.

CITIZEN PRESIDENT OF THE CONGRESS:

In promising, in the presence of the representatives of the States and People of Colombia, faithfully to perform the duties which the institutions impose upon the President of these States and People, I assume an obligation which costs me no moral sacrifice whatever, because my constant political convictions are in entire agreement with those institutions, and with the nature of their requirements. From my childhood I have desired liberty for my country, in order that individual activity, by its development, might realize its own moral and material progress. And, as the means of securing that

liberty, I associated myself with those who opposed gubernatorial centralization, and what were called "local liberties." Centralization and despotism were born on the same day, and with them the misery and ignorance of the multitudes. I also associated myself with those who favored the apparent weakness of governments, that they might be irresistible by the force of opinion, whenever it should become necessary to protect the rights which they feared might be violated or threatened. The nation now has, as you have said, institutions founded on these fundamental theories, and, for the first executor of them, a humble citizen, who cannot oppose them, even remotely, in their free development, because he possesses none of those brilliant endowments which seduce the people, and lead them by admiration to compromise their liberties. And this community has also, for the security of that liberty, the example, so rare in the world, of the most conspicuous citizens, in whom ambitious liberticide might seem justifiable by the greatness of their powers and the opportuneness and brilliancy of their services, but who have contributed to, or accepted with a good grace, the practical establishment of popular sovereignty and the ascendancy of the civil power. My election, therefore, while I was in a foreign country, without having participated in the last conflicts, is a fact of high significance, which has exalted the country and those who were not elected, more than myself, because it is a proof of the ascendancy of constitutional principles in the nation. It is now incumbent on my honor and patriotism to justify that wish, by requiring of myself, that, during the period of my administration, the era of pacific solutions shall commence, of rights for all, tolerance, the cultivation of benevolent sentiments and moral and material progress, to follow the agitated, painful and bloody period of the gestation of the Republic, in a people born and formed under the influence of the laws and customs of that gloomy and Catholic monarch, Philip 2d of Spain. It is in virtue of my antecedents, and because, as you have so kindly said, I have been exempt from the false reasonings and contradictions of the schools, that the Nation has elected me the Executor of its laws, and their representative for the exterior; and surely, on so solemn an occasion, it could not be that I should fear to pursue the path I have before followed. I hope I shall want neither the civil courage, nor the firmness nor probity necessary, to satisfy the hopes of the Nation. .

The Congress, in declaring with unanimity that the vote of the States called me to the first magistracy, have given a proof of rectitude, which, while it tends to accredit our institutions, gives me a great moral force, which is a condition indispensable to a happy fulfillment of the mission conferred by the people. Permit me to say, that I am full of gratitude for all these acts, which are performed as duties, but which also reveal much personal kindness and consideration.

The direction of the foreign relations, which involve external security, is almost the only foundation of the institution of the federal power; and that func-

tion is entrusted to the President. In the present state of the world, when the means of communication, the relations of commerce, the necessities of industry, and, in short, the material solidarity, have so closely drawn together the society of peoples, that there is no one, how small soever it may be, which is not obliged to respect the general rules of public right, and to proceed in harmony with the others. And this necessity is the greater, when an extensive and rich territory is possessed, stretching out on two oceans, with valuable productions, immense rivers, various climates, unavoidable points of transit, and perhaps of contact, between the civilization of the east and the west. All this imposes on me the obligation to apply myself with diligence to the study of our duties, and to feel the greatest solicitude to perform them all, even those which may appear to us the most onerous, with perfectly good faith and an earnest will. Nations, like individuals, need to establish their reputation on solid bases; and there is nothing more solid than probity, and nothing so prejudicial or despicable as a system of transient expedients, falsehood and restrictions, which has sometimes tried to pass for patriotism, or for skill in eluding obligations contracted, to defer their performance. I know that at the present time, thanks to the good faith with which this business has been conducted by the government, and the rectitude with which the diplomatic agents of friendly nations, residing in this capital, have acted, no pending difficulty exists which might compromise our exterior peace. Notwithstanding the general agitation of the world, and the complications which daily arise in the relations of different nations, from the state of effervescence in which Europe appears to be, I trust that no obstacle will be presented, from without, to our march of progress; but, on the contrary, I promise myself that, by punctually fulfilling all our duties, and cultivating with frankness and honor the friendship of other nations, modest and independent, without preferences or alliances which might enchain our policy, we may attain respect and sympathy. The consideration of the great nations towards the small, goes on developing itself in proportion as civilization displays proof, of the preconstituted and unchangeable harmony which exists between general interests, and the equally inevitable sanction which chastises, if not as crimes, at least as faults, violations of the natural law. Thus it is that an attentive observer, in spite of certain exceptional facts, perceives a very considerable progress in international morality, with positive advantage to nations of small material forces; but, to participate in that progress, it is also indispensable that they show themselves worthy of it, by the severity of their policy, the rectitude of their measures, and the exact fulfillment of their obligations.

With the seal of such general principles, the administration which is to-day inaugurated will be marked; and thus it is that I promise to fulfill the duty of accrediting ourselves abroad. With neighboring nations, twins with Colombia in history, and of identical and very similar social conditions, we shall act as friends, if not as brothers, in the most cordial and loving acceptance of the

word. Nothing will be omitted for the establishment of a moral alliance with them, which may banish war forever, and be fruitful of benefits. These peoples, of Spanish origin, born on the same day, emancipated from the same mother-country in the same year, and aspiring to an analogous social and political condition, form in reality only one nation, with great elements of power and progress, and without any necessity of foreign protection, because they are able, by themselves alone, to procure for themselves the honorable security which is derived from inherent power. They all were born, it is true, with hereditary diseases, and they all have had a most painful infancy; but it is now plainly apparent that they are reaching their manhood, and that, by tearing from their vitals the tumors which were devouring them, they are acquiring solid and lasting civilization. And—what a singular fact!—while the old communities, which have so much reproached us for our frequent revolutions, now begin to acknowledge that the edifice in which they were sheltered is tottering, and wars commencing on all sides, seriously threaten their social order, Spanish America is closing her revolutionary period, regenerating herself by liberty, and confirming the new democratic social order. Unquestionably the Aurora of their peace and happiness is now exhibiting its resplendence; and the steamers which plough their rivers, and the locomotives which have begun to traverse their deserts, presage the approach of the days promised to virtue and industry. Then the implacable censors of our misfortunes must acknowledge, that what appeared to be the decay and incapacity of the race, was the germ and exuberance of life; and that abroad, where order was believed to have been established forever, they were running through flowery banks to a wild cataract. And it will come to pass, that the political science of the New World, founded on the rights of all, and to which these peoples have trusted their futurity for more than fifty years, will receive its definitive consecration.

You have called my attention, in your address, to the general situation of the country, the prospects of the liberal cause, and my own public condition.

I know that the general situation of the country has many dark shades, since the recent termination of the conflicts of a violent civil war, which caused great devastations in material order, and perhaps still greater in moral order; but it is no less true that there are great elements of reorganization, with which peace may soon be secured, credit re-established, and sources of material prosperity opened: sources more than sufficient for their restoration. The results of war have always been terrible, and especially those of civil war. The condition of the country was not better on emerging from the war of Independence. At that time there were not all the elements of reorganization which we now possess. Everything suffers from a state of conflict: material order, as well as moral order; matter as well as mind; but there is no reason to despair. Efforts will be made to raise and support interior credit, which has been so much depressed by inevitable causes during an obstinate and destructive struggle; the branches of income to the Treasury will be administered with

all the strictness which our necessities require; and the most diligent solicitude will be extended to all business incumbent on the federal power.

Besides giving a steady and scrupulous attention to the reorganization of the service, which in a great degree constitutes the force of the government, I shall apply myself to the task of making the constitutional theory of the sovereignty of the States operate in perfect harmony with the proper exercise of the federal authority. That harmonious movement of the two existences is one of the difficulties of the federal system, arising from the usurping tendencies of the one over the other. For my part, I wish to follow in this the example of the immortal Jefferson, who is considered, in the United States of America, as the founder of local liberties during the period of his administration, in the extension which he gave to the independent action of the States, by circumscribing the federal authority which the first administrations had extended. That is to say, that I shall secure respect for the autonomy of the States, as far as the preservation of the national unity and internal and external peace will permit; but I will not consent that the chain shall be broken, or that the federal authority be disobeyed or disregarded, while acting within its constitutional sphere. On the harmonious but inexorable action of the two entities, in my opinion, depend the subsistence of the Union and the integrity of this territory, which is bounded by two seas, and which is to become the abode of free citizens, who, stimulated by institutions, shall devote themselves to instruction and labor, to avail themselves, as a Christian community, of the gifts which this country offers to us.

I have strong confidence that, by pursuing a tolerant and enlightened policy in its forms, firm in purpose, obedient to the Constitution in its spirit and letter, protecting liberty, being exact in its service, resolute in requiring what is due and paying what is owed, peace, which is now the object of general aspiration, the sincere desire of the great laboring and civilized majority, the point of departure for every improvement, as well as for the reign of right and security to all and every one, will not be delayed; and liberty, which repairs, improves and fertilizes everything, will soon crown all our wishes.

I shall exert myself, Sir, to succeed in making all these benefits realities during the period of my administration; and, if by that means I shall merit the gratitude of my fellow-citizens, which is surely the best of rewards for a republican, it will be but just, just, indeed it is, that henceforward it should be paid, in abundance and sincerity, to the illustrious citizen whom I have the honor to succeed; because to his exemplary consecration of himself to the good of the Republic we owe the possibility of realizing all this; while to the nobility of his character the country is now indebted for a lofty example of obedience to its constitution, and of virtuous disinterestedness.

M. MURILLO.

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